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This Copy For

NEWS CONFERENCE

#356

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH PIERRE SALINGER

DECEMBER 3, 1962

12:24 P.M. EST

MONDAY

MR. SALINGER: I have a few items here.

First, the President has received a report of the Board he appointed to look into the dispute between the International Association of Machinists and the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, and following receipt of that report has written a letter to the Attorney General calling on him to take action under the provisions of section 208 of the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 to seek an injunction against continuance of the strike. This is following the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act.

QUESTION: The 80 days?

MR. SALINGER: That is correct.

QUESTION: Do you know where they are going to ask the injunction?

MR. SALINGER: I do not know that; no.

QUESTION: Pierre, those men have already gone back to work, but you are setting up the legal 30-day wait?

MR. SALINGER: That is correct.

QUESTION: Are you going to have copies of this?

MR. SALINGER: They gave it out.

QUESTION: Is the President's letter included in this?

MR. SALINGER: Yes, sir. It is in your package. Let's all stop and study our packages for a few minutes.

The other item is the list of those attending the luncheon today for the members of the Cabinet from Japan who are here.

QUESTION: Pierre, is there any chance of any sound film of any kind in connection with this luncheon?

MR. SALINGER: I don't think so; no, sir. It is a regular luncheon and will be handled as all luncheons are.

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MR. SALINGER: The United States Cabinet group went to Japan last year and they are paying a return visit. Their interests are wide, but mainly in the field of economics.

QUESTION: Do you expect toasts?

MR. SALINGER: I expect toasts, which we will put out this afternoon.

QUESTION: What can you tell us about the NSC meeting?

MR. SALINGER: The Executive Committee of the National Security Council met for about an hour and 20 minutes this morning. I would say the bulk of that was taken up by a report from Governor Harriman and other members of his fact-finding mission on the situation in India. I won't have anything more to say about that particular aspect except to say they did make a report to the full group and that was followed by a shorter discussion on Cuba, with particular attention to the continuing discussions between the United States and Soviet representatives to the UN in New York.

QUESTION: What was said about negotiations on India and Pakistan on Kashmir?

MR. SALINGER: The subject of Kashmir did come up at the meeting this morning.

QUESTION: Have you been asked to comment on the article in the Saturday Evening Post by Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett about Ambassador Stevenson's role?

MR. SALINGER: Let me read you a short statement on that.

QUESTION: By the President?

MR. SALINGER: My statement.

"The proceedings of the National Security Council have been secret since its founding in 1947 and will continue to be. The various positions of members of the National Security Council taken during deliberations must also remain secret in order to permit access by the President to the frank expression of views.

"I can state flatly, however, that Ambassador Stevenson strongly supported the decision taken by the President on the quarantine and brilliantly developed the United States position at the United Nations during the days which followed. He also played the key role

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"I can state flatly, however, that Ambassador Stevenson strongly supported the decision taken by the President on the quarantine and brilliantly developed the United States position at the United Nations during the days which followed. He also played the key role in the negotiations at the United Nations on the Cuban matter."

QUESTION: End of statement?

MR. SALINGER: End of statement.

QUESTION: Pierre, could you tell us -- the Governor was down here this morning, we understand.

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MR. SALINGER: Governor Stevenson participated this morning in the meeting of the National Security Council Executive Committee.

Q. Could you tell us whether he and the President discussed the article in the Saturday Evening Post?

MR. SALINGER: I couldn't tell you that. He came down to attend the meeting.

Q. Pierre, this statement doesn't -- maybe I missed it -- deal with whether or not, during the course of it you tell part of what occurred on Stevenson's position. The story, as I understand it, says he at one point advocated an exchange, or some arrangement on our missile bases. Did he ever advocate any such thing?

MR. SALINGER: I think my statement speaks for itself. The early part of my statement covers that point.

Q. I think the statement states that is support. What preceded his support of it?

MR. SALINGER: I think I made it clear.

Q. This is certainly a hatchet job on Adlai if you go no further.

MR. SALINGER: Do you want to sit on this side and take over my place?

Q. In other words, it is going to be left as a hatchet job.

MR. SALINGER: I think my position is very clear.

Q. I don't think that is clear.

Q. Do you anticipate that Adlai is going to stay as Ambassador to the UN?

MR. SALINGER: There is absolutely no question about it.

Q. Pierre, can you recall the last time you made a statement of this kind where it wasn't a White House statement?

MR. SALINGER: A number of times.

Q. In a matter as critical as this?

MR. SALINGER: Frequently.

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with a whole lot of help from the White House.

MR. SALINGER: Let me go on BACKGROUND for the elements of that matter which are touched on in the article by Mr. Roberts in the Washington Post this morning.

* * * * *

First of all, the President, in a number of post-mortems which have taken place on the Cuban matter, has never discussed the matter with any single reporter. That goes for Mr. Bartlett, Stewart Alsop, Knebel, the gentleman from the New York Times who prepared their post-mortems, and any others which are underway. He has not talked with anyone.

The White House did not see or was not asked to clear the text in advance, as has been said in some quarters. We did not see it until the Saturday Evening Post came to this office this morning.

Now, Number 3, I think any fair-minded examination of the reports of Mr. Bartlett over a period of time will demonstrate that he has not used any information of an inside nature from the White House in his writings.

Q. Are you aware in saying that that it was Mr. Bartlett, I believe, who had the first report of Chester Bowles that preceded his movement?

MR. SALINGER: I am fully cognizant and make that statement in light of that.

Q. There is a difficulty because of the relationship of Charlie Bartlett with the President. Now, in Charles Roberts' story this morning, he mentions Mr. Bartlett carrying a message between the Soviet Embassy and the White House.

MR. SALINGER: Let me again say on BACKGROUND, Mr. Roberts is entirely inaccurate.

Q. On that point?

MR. SALINGER: On that point. It is a fact that Mr. Bolshakov had lunch with Bartlett and told him of the conversation with Khrushchev, but this took place two days after the President made his October 22nd speech, and, therefore, could not be considered anywhere in the nature of a message from Khrushchev to the President through Bartlett.

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Q. In a matter as critical as this?

MR. SALINGER: Frequently.

Q. Do you interpret this as an endorsement of Adlai by the President or by the Press Secretary?

MR. SALINGER: This statement was prepared and cleared with the knowledge and advice of the President.

Q. Pierre, we are under the impression from that the story in the Post was prepared by Stewart Alsop and also Charles Bartlett, who has an unusual relationship with the President,

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Q. Pierre, does the White House take the Saturday Evening Post by subscription?

MR. SALINGER: They send it to us. We get it.

Q. Pierre, on that point, did Mr. Bolshakov attempt to communicate any views to the Attorney General or to any members of the Administration following his return from Moscow?

MR. SALINGER: I wouldn't be in a position to comment on that. I only know, again on BACKGROUND, no views were communicated from Bolshakov to any member of the Administration prior to the October 22nd speech.

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Q. Would you put it on the record, this denial of the Bolshakov relationship?

MR. SALINGER: I would rather leave it that way.

Q. The article in the magazine is in error in that respect; is that right?

MR. SALINGER: I haven't read it that carefully. I am only referring to Roberts' analysis of the article.

Q. You say no one communicated via Bolshakov?

MR. SALINGER: On this matter prior to October 22nd; that is correct.

Q. Then you are saying that Joseph Alsop's reports on that fact are inaccurate?

MR. SALINGER: Which reports?

Q. Joseph Alsop reported this on two occasions, before the Saturday Evening Post article, that Bolshakov passed this information along to a high-level member of the Administration.

MR. SALINGER: I will tell you again, for BACKGROUND, that is inaccurate. He did not communicate a message to any member of the Administration.

Q. Bolshakov didn't do anything in this, as far as you know, prior to the October 22nd speech?

MR. SALINGER: That is correct.

Q. Subsequent to that, the conversation between Bolshakov and Bartlett was relayed to the President.

MR. SALINGER: I am confident it was.

Q. Has there been any effort by the President to track down who gave the information to Bartlett and Alsop and, if so, has there been a reprimand?

MR. SALINGER: Again, for BACKGROUND, I don't know who talked with Bartlett or Alsop. I have no idea.

Q. Your directive ought to give you some hint about that.

MR. SALINGER: This is a very good indication of the failure of this directive.

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Q. We have had another instance when Stew Alsop had an interview with the President and wrote a piece in the Saturday Evening Post about the United States taking a pre-emptive first stake and you had to knock that down. That actually was based on an interview.

Q. There was no interview.

MR. SALINGER: There was no interview; that is correct. As long as we are talking about error, in Roberts' story this morning he says that Stevenson came to Washington on Saturday to make his views known. Mr. Stevenson did, in fact, come to Washington on Tuesday and was in town all week.

Q. Tuesday prior?

MR. SALINGER: Tuesday.

Q. Did Stevenson ask for McCloy here, or were they assigned to him?

✓ MR. SALINGER: For BACKGROUND, it is my understanding he asked for McCloy.

Q. You say Stevenson came when the President first learned about the missiles.

MR. SALINGER: That is correct.

Q. He stayed here all week?

MR. SALINGER: That is correct.

* * * * *

Q. On the matter of the statement you just gave us on the record, the latter part where you say Stevenson strongly supported the decision taken by the President, and your reference ahead of that to the security wrap on NSC matters, it seems to me that the White House is neither confirming or denying the allegation of Stevenson being soft on the Cuba line.

MR. SALINGER: I think my statement is very right.

Q. Pierre, I am just trying to find out where you want to leave this.

MR. SALINGER: I have left this.

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Q. Pierre, when you say that so far as you know, Charles Bartlett has never been using the information he may have acquired in his unique relationship with the President, how would you be in a position to know what the President was communicating to Bartlett?

MR. SALINGER: Again, for BACKGROUND, I have to take the President's word for that.

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Q. Pierre, can we develop this problem consistent with the confines of your statement? You say Stevenson strongly supported the President. Could it be that this story was based on the fact that during the proceedings of the NSC Stevenson had some other ideas and once the decision was made, naturally he would support it. At any time during this time did Governor Stevenson ever support or advocate dealing off these bases of ours in other parts of the world?

* * * * *

MR. SALINGER: Let me say OFF THE RECORD, Smitty,

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there is no useful purpose in taking each of the individuals who sat on these deliberations and saying "This is where he stood on Tuesday or Wednesday." The President needs to have the frankest exchange of views. He needs to have the widest latitude of views. Nothing is accomplished when the problem comes up whether these people, after the discussion was held, were against it or in support. I have made this very clear.

Q. Could you clarify the role of Bolshakov in this? What was his relationship before he went back to Moscow?

MR. SALINGER: I couldn't comment on that.

Q. Pierre, on this subject that you refer to that the President has never talked to any reporters, have you gathered together a chronology of the crisis? Now, paying due respect to the recognized ability of both Mr. Alsop and Mr. Bartlett, none of the rest of these chronologies have had the kind of intimate detail of who stood where on what position, as the Saturday Evening Post seems to have.

Now, if these discussions are best left secret, don't you think a rule has been violated by some members of the White House staff, because no other reporter --

MR. SALINGER: Let me go OFF THE RECORD.

I wouldn't make the assumption there was a member of the White House staff. There were 15 people.

Q. People involved in the Executive Committee?

MR. SALINGER: I am not going to get into that aspect.

Q. Sandy raises the point that any of us who went on these were all told no mention of the people or positions for obvious reasons; that you cannot conduct business this way.

MR. SALINGER: That has been our position.

Q. These were limited meetings with a limited number of people in attendance. Somebody must have, as Sandy says, gone way out of the rules.

MR. SALINGER: You can draw that assumption. You don't need me.

Q. Are we making it up out of whole cloth or is it true?

MR. SALINGER: I am not aware of how the information was

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Q. I would rather not have the argument changed around.

MR. SALINGER: I am getting around to the heart of the matter.

Q. Can we get it on the record on this problem, because it is rather directly on the language of your statement. You speak of the deep secrecy surrounding these matters. Obviously a high-ranking member, one or more, of this Administration doesn't agree, and have taken independent action to report what went on in a security meeting with the President. My question to you is: Is the President doing anything about this?

MR. SALINGER: My statement stands.

Q. Does the President know where the information came from?

MR. SALINGER: I don't know.

Q. Pierre, there seems to be a pattern established which again, first with Chester Bowles last summer, and now continues with Stevenson, are always lumped together as being soft-liners on various aspects of American policies. Is the President or the White House prepared to issue a statement backing up Stevenson in this particular case?

MR. SALINGER: I just issued a statement.

Q. But a statement denying the charges?

MR. SALINGER: I just issued a statement.

Q. Pierre, could you tell us if the President is satisfied with Mr. Stevenson as his UN Ambassador?

MR. SALINGER: I have answered that question on the record. Do you want to go back and find it? I stated categorically the answer to that question, Bill.

Q. I said generally.

MR. SALINGER: I was asked if he was going to be replaced and I said there is no question about that.

Q. Is the President happy with Mr. Stevenson?

MR. SALINGER: If he wasn't, do you think he would keep him there?

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MR. SALINGER: I am not aware of how the information was gathered and I think my statement stands.

Q. Those who went on those recaps, as Ned says, were told politely but firmly "We are not going to get into anything substantive of who stands where." Then this article comes out written at the same time these other things were being done.

MR. SALINGER: Sandy, OFF THE RECORD, you are getting a very good look at Mr. Mannings problem, my problem, and Mr. Sylvester's problem.

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MR. SALINGER: If he wasn't, do you think he would keep him there?

Q. I can only say that Stevenson's advisors described this job as a hatchet job and they are completely flabbergasted by it, and I don't think your statement begins to cover the sort of thing that Stevenson will need if he is going to stay on.

Q. The Governor said the President spoke to him briefly about this this morning. Has the President spoken with Charlie Bartlett or Stewart Alsop about it?

MR. SALINGER: I couldn't tell you about that.

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Q. Pierre, we talked to Governor Stevenson and asked him did he discuss this matter with the President, and he said, "Well, the President brought it up with me and told me about the statement he was going to make."

MR. SALINGER: He was referring to this statement. It was shown to Governor Stevenson.

Q. Pierre, is it not true that following the Cuban crisis that Mr. Bartlett was a week end guest at Glen Ora?

MR. SALINGER: I have no idea of that.

Q. Pierre, is there an official chronology of this Cuban thing that is going to be made public?

MR. SALINGER: We are not planning to make anything public.

Q. Is the White House unhappy about the appearance of this article, distressed that this information became public?

MR. SALINGER: I have made the statement.

Q. Is the President going to have a press conference this week?

MR. SALINGER: I don't know yet.

Q. The magazine makes the point that Stevenson was not in line with most of the members of the Executive Committee, but after the decision was made, he strongly supported it at the UN. Your statement says what happens is secret. After that he supported it, so you end up agreeing with the article.

MR. SALINGER: That is not my understanding of what the article says; however, I haven't read it.

Q. Pierre, you say you haven't read this article and the White House is issuing a statement without reading the article and the President hasn't read it?

MR. SALINGER: I haven't read it.

Q. Has the President read it?

MR. SALINGER: I couldn't tell you.

Q. How long will the Governor hold his present job?

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Q. You said there was no question of replacing him? Is there a time limit on that?

Q. Is Ambassador Stevenson seeing the President privately today in addition to the other meeting?

MR. SALINGER: That question has been answered by your colleagues.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

END